

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 TRSE-00 SAM-01 /089 W

----- 036802

R 061046Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3647

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3059

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LA

SUBJECT: PATHET LAO PRESSURE CONTINUES AT INFORMATION
MINISTRY

REF: VIENTIANE 1793 (NOTAL)

1. PATHET LAO PRESSURE CONTINUES AT PGNU MINISTRY OF INFORMATION. THERE HAVE BEEN FEW TANGIBLE CHANGES SINCE OUR LAST REPORT (REFTEL)--INDEED, THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS DETAILED TO SENIOR MIN INFO POSITIONS FOR LAST TWO YEARS ARE STILL THERE--BUT THE ATMOSPHERE IS BECOMING MORE OPPRESSIVE FOR VIENTIANE SIDE OFFICIALS.

2. LAO NATIONAL RADIO (LNR) DIRECTOR KATH DITTHAVONG, ONE OF THOSE DUE TO RETURN TO FON MIN, TOLD EMBOFF MAY 4 THAT LPF REPRESENTATIVES IN MINISTRY ARE ADMANTLY INSISTING THAT LNR BROADCASTS CARRY INFORMATION THAT "CONFORMS TO PRESENT POLITICAL REALITIES IN LAOS." HE SINGLED OUT MINISTRY'S CHEF DE CABINET, DR. KHAMSENGKEO SENGSAITHITH, AS A LEADER IN ATTEMPT TO CONTROL LNR OUTPUT. KATH ADDED THAT
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LPF HAVE NO INTEREST IN "NEWS", AS TERM IS UNDERSTOOD IN

THE WEST.

3. KATH ALSO SAID THAT LPF HAVE BEEN TRYING TO HAVE LNR'S NEWS DIRECTOR, A FORCES ARMEES NEUTRALISTES (FAN) MAJOR, SENT BACK TO DEFENSE MINISTRY BECAUSE "HE KNOWS TOO MUCH ABOUT THE LPF FOR THEM TO WANT HIM AROUND." KATH EXPRESSED SOME OPTIMISM THAT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO RETAIN HIS OWN JOB, BUT DOUBTED THAT SAMLITH RATSAPHONG, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL WHO IS ALSO ON DETAIL FOR FON MIN, WOULD BE PERMITTED TO STAY MUCH LONGER.

4. KHAMSENGKEO HIMSELF GAVE EMBOFF AN (UNDERSTANDABLY) UPBEAT READING OF THE SITUATION AT THE MINISTRY ON APRIL 30. INITIALLY THERE HAD BEEN PROBLEMS, KHAMSENGKEO SAID, BECAUSE VIENTIANE SIDE TECHNICIANS HAD FAILED TO UNDERSTAND THAT MIN INFO WAS NO LONGER SPOKESMAN FOR VIENTIANE SIDE ALONE BUT FOR PGNU AS A WHOLE. HOWEVER, SITUATION FROM KHAMSENGKEO'S STANDPOINT HAD GREATLY "IMPROVED" IN RECENT MONTHS.

5. ON MAY 3 WARSAW-TRAINED CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION AT MIN INFO KHAMCHONG LUANGPRASEUTH VOICED PESSIMISM TO EMBOFF OVER PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN HIS MINISTRY AND IN LAOS GENERALLY. HE SAID THAT LAOS IS EXPERIENCING "CALM BEFORE THE STORM", ADDING THAT LAOS HAS "ALREADY FALLEN IN HANOI'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE." (COMMENT: SUCH A SARDONIC ANALYSIS OF SITUATION FROM KHAMCHONG, WHO HAS BEEN AN OUTSPOKEN, ACTIVE INDEPENDENT, ILLUSTRATES THE PRESENT MOOD IN VIENTIANE.)

6. WIFE OF THE MINISTRY'S FORMER DIRECTOR OF PRESS BOUAPHET (WHO, WITH HIS CHIEF ASSISTANT, WAS OBLIGED TO RESIGN IN JANUARY AS REPORTED REFTEL AND IS NOW ATTACHE DE CABINET) CALLED ON WIFE USIS DIRECTOR TO SAY THAT THE PL HAVE GIVEN THE TEN MOST SENIOR VIENTIANE SIDE EMPLOYEES AT THE MINISTRY THREE MONTHS TO "SHAPE UP". HER VISIT SEEMED TO BE INITIAL APPROACH TO ASCERTAIN WHAT HELP THEY MIGHT RECEIVE FROM U.S.

7. ONLY EXCEPTION TO THIS PATTERN OF PL OPTIMISM AND VIENTIANE SIDE PESSIMISM AT MIN INFO HAS BEEN SECRETARY-GENERAL SAMLITH. HE TOLD CHARGE MAY 3 THAT THINGS HAD DEVELOPED VERY WELL AT THE MINISTRY AND TWO SIDES WERE COOPERATING SATISFACTORILY.
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8. COMMENT: FROM THE LPF VANTAGE, THINGS HAVE INDEED "IMPROVED" AT THE MINISTRY. ONE VISIBLE INDICATION IS DAILY BULLETIN OF LAO PRESSE, WHICH HAS GONE DOWNHILL. QUOTIENT OF TASS AND HSINHUA MATERIAL IN LAO PRESSE APPEARS TO BE ON THE RISE, ALTHOUGH AFP REMAINS THE PRINCIPAL NEWS SOURCE. AS A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, LAO PRESSE, ARTICLE OF APRIL 18 ON ANNUAL ROCKET FESTIVAL CONTAINED THIS GRATUITOUS SLAM: "ONE OF

THE MOST ATTRACTIVE SPECTACLES WAS CERTAINLY THE DISPLAY
BY STUDENTS FROM THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF LAW AND ADMINISTRATION
AND TEACHER'S SCHOOL AT DONG DOK OF BANNERS ENDORSING PEACE,
NATIONAL CONCORD AND RECOGNITION OF THE PRG. THEY ALTERNATED
THEIR SONGS WITH SLOGANS CONDEMNING THE CIA, PROFITEERS IN
THEIR TROUBLE (SIC) AND PECULATORS AND CORRUPT PERSONS
OF ALL STRIPES."

CHAPMAN

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NNN

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